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The Modernist Arabic Reading of The Religious Text (Muhmmad Arkoun and Nasr Abu – Zaid Model)

*Mohammad Khaled Al-Sheyyab**

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with Nasr Hamid Abu-Zaid's and Muhammad Arkoun's viewpoints of the religious text and of the best ways to read it. and the obstacles facing their discourses in the context of their quest for formulating various ways for dealing with the Quranic text and understanding it. The paper also deals with critical and questioning categories and principles employed by these discourses in dealing with the Quranic text, its interpretations and exegesis. Abu-Zaid's and Arkoun's treatment of the Quranic text employed critical, historicist and hermeneutic methods, to reveal its historicity and the limits of its field of reference, on one hand, and, on the other, to dismantle its sanctity and authenticating structure, to clear the way for humanistic modernistic values, which are a token of, and a condition for, belonging to the modern age, and achieving integration into the global community. Whereas Arkoun subjected the religious text to a historical and epistemological critique to achieve the unification of Islamic reason, and liberate it from the doctrinaire mentality, which actually belongs to the Middle ages. Abu Zaid subjected the religious text to the dictates of reason and to a historical reading of it, considering reality the key to understanding it, in order to reopen Ijtihad, (E) not only in legislation and the deduction of judgments, but also in interpreting basic principle and articles of faith. Thus, what the modernist reading of the Quran, epitomized by Abu-Zaid and Arkoun, aims at is dispelling the ideological and theological utilization of history, in order to clear the way for a historical understanding of the religious text.

Keywords: The Modernist Arabic Reading, The Religious Text, Muhammad Arkoun, Nasr Abu-Zaid.

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